

shoppe
antiques
are here
yellow bowl
for beating
dutch
chair
with apples
on it

housekeep
she never does
it
her gaudy
clothes
but piles
things in like
a sailor

-- Gloria Kenison

Millis MA

A KING

-- for Russell Edson

A king is too fat, so he declares himself thin. His subjects, who are thin, he declares fat (so that no foreigner will say "The king is thin and his subjects are thin, but the king is not like his subjects, so someone must not be thin." Which could lead to questioning disastrous to the world.).

But because a king should not be too thin, or people will think he is poor and lose respect for him, the king eats even more than before. He eats until he can't move at all, looks like a gigantic maggot in a king's suit or a huge white shaky-fleshed walrus, and declares himself "just right."

And because a king's subjects should not be fat or it will look like they are lazy, the subjects diet until they are skeletons and die.

The king is irate at first. The deaths smack of treason. He declares his subjects traitors, and proclaims his joy that they are dead.

But by noon he is hungry. And no one to bring him food. So he hems and haws and finally pardons everyone and declares them still living.

"You are alive" declares the king, anticipating the grateful cheers, the rush to bring his dinner. "You are alive, you are alive, you are alive!" screams the king.